(b) the methods which have been employed to make the three rivers of Europe viz. Thames, Rhines and Danube, which were previously highly polluted ones, but now pollution free;

(c) whether any high level enquiry has been conducted into the matter of making these holy rivers in India pollution free;

(d) whether the agencies responsible for the same have been punished; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) River conservation work has been taken up for a number of rivers in the country, starting with the Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase I in 1985, for polluted stretches in the Ganga river, extending to the major tributaries of the Ganga in 1993, and further expanding to cover 34 major rivers in 20 States under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) from 1995 onwards. The expenditure on GAP-I was Rs.433.30 crore and the approved cost of NRCP is Rs,4783 crore.

With the completion of the pollution abatement works, the water quality of the river Ganga has shown an improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality but this is not so in the case of the Yamuna, primarily due to the large gap between the demand and the availability of sewage treatment capacity, particularly in Delhi, and lack of availability of fresh water for ensuring minimum flow in the river. The works in respect of other rivers are at different stages of completion.

(b) The river clean up projects in rivers like the Thames, Rhine and Danube span a long period of time, between 20—40 years, with much higher investments and costs when compared with Ganga Action Plan and the NRCP. The strategies involved were primarily, identification of pollution hotspots and treating of domestic and industrial effluents through construction of wastewater treatment plants. For Indian rivers, domestic sewage is the major source of pollution and interception and diversion of raw sewage and treatment through sewage treatment plants form the main components of pollution abatement works undertaken by the Government. The works are implemented through agencies nominated by the State Government. As per an independent evaluation study conducted by University of Bath and Metroeconomica, United Kingdom and the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi (2000), the Ganga Action Plan compared favourably, both in terms of cost and time taken, and results achieved with those of the major rivers of the world like Thames, Rhine and Danube.

(c) to (e) No high level enquiry has been conducted. However, 314 defaulting industries have been closed as on 31.12.2006.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO THE UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Development of technique for preservation of fruits

1829. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has developed a technique of long lasting preservation of fruits;

(b) if so, whether this technique has been adopted for preservation of various type of fruits and vegetables in Himachal Pradesh;

(c) if so, the results thereof, and

(d) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Experimental tests on apples from Himachal Pradesh have been conducted and the results are encouraging. However, commercial application of this technology has not been taken up in Himachal Pradesh.

(c) and (d) Mango was the only fruit among the various food items approved for radiation preservation, under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act Rules 1955. However, recently a notification has been issued approving food irradiation on generic class basis. With this, commercial radiation processing of other fruits is now possible.

Shortage of Coal Washeries

†1830. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is shortage of coal washeries in the country;

(b) whether Government propose to enhance the number of coal washeries keeping in view the introduction of clean coal technology;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government propose to make it mandatory for captive coal mines to build washeries; and

(e) if so, by when the directions would be issued in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Demand of washed coal is derived out of consumers' need of improved and consistent quality arising out of techno commercial requirement. Demand for coal is assessed in terms of raw coal whereas specific demand of consumers of washed coal is met from the washery capacity available with the coal companies or in the private sector.

(b) and (c) It has recently been decided that in order to supply improved quality and sized coal to the consumers, CIL would set up washeries under Build and Operate Scheme for supply of washed coal to all consumers other than pithead consumers. It has also been decided that all new open cast projects' with capacity of more than 2.50 MTY and not linked to pithead consumers will have an integrated washery.

1 (d) and (e) At present there is no proposal to make it mandatory for captive coal mines to build washeries.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.